

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO USIA WASHDC

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FOR: IOP/M, IEA

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TAGS: PFOR, TW

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT

REF: USIA 10059 CIRCULAR

1. PER REFTEL FOLLOWING FULL TEXT EDITORIAL MAY 5
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CHINA NEWS ENTITLED "U.S. SYSTEM AND
ALLIES." ABRIDGEMENT PERMISSIBLE, NO COPYRIGHT NOTICE
REQUIRED, NORMAL CREDIT LINE EXPECTED:

2. (BEGIN TEXT) DID RICHARD NIXON PROMISE TO SEND
U.S. BOMBERS BACK INTO ACTION IF NORTH VIETNAM SERIOUSLY
VIOLATED THE PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT?

2. DID HE HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE SUCH A COMMITMENT?

3. THE ANSWER TO BOTH QUESTIONS IS YES.

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4. WAS GERALD FORD BOUND BY THE PROMISE? DID HE HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO ORDER RENREWEED U.S. BOMBING WHEN THE NORTH VIETNAMESE BEGAN A DECISIVE MILITARY OFFENSIVE WHICH CLEARLY VIOLATED THA PARIS TREATY?

5. IN BOTH CASES THE ANSWER IS NO.

6. THIS ANOMALY GROWS OUT OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM AND NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY NATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AMERICANS.

7. CONGRESS GAVE LYNDON JOHNSON ALMOST UNLIMITED WAR POWERS IN THE FORM OF THE TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION.

8. WHAT CONGRESS GIVES IT CAN TAKE BACK. ONE CONGRESS CANNOT BIND ANOTHER. ONE PRESIDENT CANNOT COMMIT ANOTHER.

9. TREATIES ARE MORE BINDING. THEY ARE NEGOTIATED BY THE EXECUTIVE AND MUST BE APPROVED BY A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY OF THE SENATE.

10. WHATEVER THE MORAL COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO SOUTH VIETNAM MAY HAVE BEEN, NO TREATY WAS INVOLVED.

11. CONGRESS HAD TAKEN AWAY MOST OF NIXON'S WARMAKING POWERS BEFORE HE LEFT THE WHITE HOUSE.

12. FORD ENTERED UPON THE PRESIDENCY SPECIFICALLY FORBIDDEN TO REINTRODUCE COMBAT FORCES INTO INDOCHINA.

13. HE WAS RELUCTANT EVEN TO USE MARINES IN THE VIETNAM EVACUATION. HIS AUTHORITY TO RISK MAERICAN LIVES TO TAKE OUT VIETNAMESE WAS IN DOUBT. HE SENT ONLY A MINISCULE FORCE OF 800.

14. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED IF THE COMMUNISTS HAD TRIED TO PREVENT THE EVACUATION.

15. CONSTITUTIONALLY, THE UNITED STATES GOES TO WAR ONLY UPON THE DECLARATION OF CONGRESS.
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16. IN 1941, FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT ASKED AND RECEIVED SUCH A DELARATION AGAINST JAPAN, GERMANY AND ITALY.

17. NOT SINCE WORLD WAR II HAS THE CONGRESS DECLARED OR BEEN ASKED TO DECLARE WAR.

18. BOTH THE KOREAN AND VIETNAM WARS WERE FOUGHT WITH

CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATIONS SHORT OF A DECLARATION.

19. AMERICAN BITTERNESS ABOUT THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE IMPLIES THAT THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN WITHIN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THE NEXT TIME AMERICA FIGHTS A MAJOR CONFLICT, CONGRESS WILL DECLARE WAR.

20. HOW WOULD THIS AFFECT THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE EVENT OF COMMUNIST ATTACK?

21. PRESUMABLY THE UNITED STATES WOULD RESPOND THROUGH THE TAIWAN DEFENSE COMMAND, AN ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED TO IMPLEMENT THE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE TREATY.

22. THIS MIGHT INCLUDE ACTIONS OF A POLICE NATURE AND THE DISPATCH OF U.S. NAVY AND AIR FORCE UNITS TO TAIWAN.

23. IF THE AGGRESSION CONTINUED, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES COULD BE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND ASK CONGRESS FOR A DECLARATION OF WAR.

24. THERE ISN'T MUCH LIKELIHOOD THAT CONGRESS WOULD GRANT THE EXECUTIVE POWER TO WAGE WAR UNDER AUTHORITY OF A TAIWAN STRAITS RESOLUTION.

25. DOES THIS WEAKEN THE U.S. COMMITMENT? SOME SAY YES AND SOME SAY NO. THAILAND, THE PHILIPPINES AND SOUTH KOREA HAVE EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED SOME FEAR OF CONTINUED U.S. WILLINGNESS TO FIGHT WITH ITS ALLIES.

26. OUR GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE U.S. COMMITMENT IS VALID AND WOULD BE LIVED UP TO.

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27. THE DOUBTERS ARE DISREGARDING PRESIDENT FORD'S REPEATED PLEDGES THAT COMMITMENTS WILL BE KEPT. THEY ARE ALSO OVERLOOKING THE FACT THAT THE FALL OF EVEN ONE MORE DOMINO MIGHT LEAD TO COMMUNIST ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES ITSELF.

28. PRESIDENT FORD IS AWARE AND THE CONGRESS IS LEARNING THAT U.S. CREDIBILITY AND COMMITMENTS ARE NOW QUESTIONED BY ENEMIES AS WELL AS FRIENDS. FURTHER WEAKENESS OR PULLBACKS COULD BE DANGEROUS TO U.S. SECURITY AND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY LEAD TO COLLAPSE OF THE U.S. DEFENSE SYSTEM.

29. IF HOLES BEGIN TO APPEAR IN THE U.S. NUCLEAR UMBRELLA, SOME OF THE STATES NOW PROTECTED WILL SEEK

NUCLEAR DETERRENTS OF THEIR OWN.

30. AMERICAN COULD BE 10 TIMES AS STRONG AND STILL
NOT BE ABLE TO SURVIVE ALONE AND FREE IN THE JUNGLE WORLD
OF TODAY.

31. REALISTIC RECONGNITION OF THIS BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
WILL PREVENT THE FREE WORLD SYSTEM OF ALLIANCES AND
DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS FROM GOING TO PIECES.

32. EVEN U.S. MORALITY, WHICH SOME BELIEVE WAS DEBASED
IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, IS NOT A LOST CAUSE.

33. TO FAULT THE UNITED STATES IS ONE THING. TO FIND
THAT AMERICANS ARE FALSE AND UNWORTHY ALLIES IS NOT
BORNE OUT BY THE SWEEP OF HISTORY -- HOWEVER LITTLE
CONSOLATION THAT MAY BE TO COMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE.
(END TEXT).
CLARKE

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